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831 171 Siberia. It is difficult to find a girl that has reached or even approached the age of sexual maturity that is innocent; and the attitude of married women to conjugal fidelity is fully characterized by the proverb, "Woman is not a loaf, can't be eaten by one (man)" (Баба не калачъ, одинъ не съѣстъ). On the Kolyma, where often several families live together in one house, it is difficult to say who is whose wife. Likewise, cases of incestuous cohabitation of the nearest blood-relations are nowhere more frequent than here.

In bringing about the degeneration and final extinction of many Russianized Siberian tribes, sexual dissoluteness, combined with the spread of syphilis, have played by no means the least important rôle.

831 177 I have here expatiated upon the unchastity of the Russian settlers and Russianized natives of the extreme northeast of Siberia, in order to show that the special position which the Koryak occupy among the neighboring tribes regarding the interrelation of the sexes cannot be due to the influence of the morals of the few representatives of a civilized people who have settled among them. On the contrary, the Koryak have waged an active struggle against the Russian influence which threatened to destroy their family life.[1]

To what, then, is due the fact that the sexual relations of the Koryak stand, according to our notions, above those of the tribes which are related to them by descent, — tribes that live under the same economic conditions, and under the influence of the same external circumstances? The explanation lies probably in the peculiar mental attitude of the Koryak.

836 621 Position of Girls prior to Marriage. — Girls, before marriage, must have no intercourse with men. This rule is pretty strictly observed by Koryak girls. Young men will not "serve"[2] for a dissolute girl. He who would undertake to serve for such a girl would expose himself to ridicule on the part of the other youths. On the other hand, the girl's father and elder brothers "are angry," the Koryak say, if they notice that their daughter or sister is intimate with young men. All investigators familiar with the life of primitive tribes know that the anger of the elders has more influence upon the conduct of the younger members of a family than preaching in the higher classes or blows in the lower classes of civilized nations, for the wrath of the elders may do harm to those against whom it is directed.

In two myths[3] we have characteristic episodes telling how a girl's brothers forced a young man to marry her when she complained that the young man had touched her or had addressed to her a request to give him water to drink.

836 847 Should a girl become pregnant before marriage, it is considered shameful, and her parents scold her. She goes off into the wilderness to be deliv-

[1] See Chapter XIV. [2] See p. 739. [3] See Part I, pp. 278, 275.

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ered of her child. She kills and buries it in the ground or in the snow. 836
If the girl points out the father of her child, her father or brothers endeavor [847]
to pommel him. In olden times cohabitation out of wedlock with a girl sometimes led to wars between the families to which the young people belonged. After reaching maturity, the girl sleeps in her combination-suit, the make[1] of which prevents unexpected violence. When strangers sleep in the house over night, girls do not undress at all, and sleep together in one bed. As we shall see later on, the bride also resists the bridegroom at the beginning of their married life, symbolizing her innocence and inaccessibility.

The girl is as inaccessible to the bridegroom while he serves for her as to a stranger. Intercourse of a bride with her bridegroom before the termination of his service is deemed a sin. Oftentimes, during the period of a young man's service, the girl goes away from her parental home to live with her relatives. In one myth it is told[2] that the sister of Cloud-Man was let down to earth pending her bridegroom's service.

Different rules for a girl's conduct are found among the tribes nearest 836
to the Koryak. Maidenly chastity is valued very little among the Chukchee, 171
says Bogoras.[3] Krasheninnikoff says of the ancient Kamchadal, "Though [585]
fond of women, this tribe is not so jealous as the Koryak. In marriages the signs of virginity are not considered, and some claim that the young men find fault with their mothers-in-law when they discover their wives to be virgin, but this I cannot assert to be authentic."[4] In my work on the Yukaghir I shall speak more fully of their custom of placing guests on the beds of the girls.

Dittmar states that a Koryak girl who had intercourse with a man was [114]
severely punished, and that her own father shot her;[5] but Krasheninnikoff asserts, in a passage which I shall touch upon again farther on, that the Maritime Koryak offered their wives and daughters to their guests.[6] In another passage[7] he says that among the Reindeer Koryak the bridegroom sleeps with his bride during the period of service. I think that these data were recorded by Krasheninnikoff on the authority of the Cossacks, who might have confused the Chukchee customs with those of the Koryak, or simply invented this statement. This seems the more probable, since not even the Chukchee offer their daughters to their guests.

In the myths of the Koryak we do not find a single allusion to such an 837
order of things. On the contrary, we find episodes of an opposite character. The girls are generally kept in a secret place,[8] or they are hidden during

[1] See p. 589.
[2] See Part I, p. 131.
[3] See Bogoras, Brief Report on the Investigations among the Chukchee of the Kolyma District, p. 36.
[4] See Krasheninnikoff, II, p. 169.
[5] See Dittmar, Die Korjaken, p. 32.
[6] See Krasheninnikoff, II, p. 202.
[7] Ibid., II, p. 22.
[8] See Part I, pp. 125, 176, 291, 302.

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which the husband shut his eyes to his wife's liaison with their herdsman; but the husband was a sickly man, and, besides, the herd belonged to his wife. I learned of another curious case on the Taigonos Peninsula. A man, being informed that his wife was visited by his neighbor while he himself was absent, said to the offender, "If you like my wife, don't visit her secretly, but take her altogether, only give me your daughter in exchange." The neighbor complied with so wise a proposal, and they exchanged the women; the neighbor, as luck would have it, having a grown-up daughter.

Treatment of Children. — The birth of a child is a joyous event, and marked by a feast, to which guests are invited from other houses, or, among the Reindeer Koryak, from other camps. This festivity is called Añanavis-xatin ("woman's feast"). Among the Maritime Koryak, all women and girls of the village are invited in. Men are not admitted at all; even the master of the house leaves his home. The main dish consists of gruel or pudding made of flour, blood, meat, and fat. This pudding is called ta'knañoika ("bearing-blessing"), symbolizing the future welfare of the child. The Reindeer Koryak, on the occasion of the birth of a child, kill one or more reindeer, and invite men and women to the feast; but the women eat apart from the men, in the sleeping-tent of the young mother, while the house-master entertains the men in the outer tent. The Reindeer Koryak make the same kind of pudding as the Maritime Koryak, and call it by the same name.

I have already spoken[1] of the taboos to which the young mother is subjected, of the care taken to guard the child against evil spirits, and of the divination ceremony while giving a name to the new-born. According to the statements of Koryak women, confinement is easy. In each settlement there is an experienced woman who acts as a midwife. The navel-string is cut with an ordinary iron knife. This knife is not used again until the child is able to walk. The new-born child is rubbed with moss, and immediately placed in a combination-suit,[2] which takes the place of a cradle. The child is rocked by the mother in her arms, or placed in bed by her own side. On the flap[3] between the child's legs moss is laid, which is frequently changed. The child is nursed up to the age of two or three years, unless a second pregnancy of the mother prevents her from doing so. At a very early age the child is given pieces of fat of reindeer or seal to suck. I was told that, if the mother dies during or soon after confinement, the child is killed and cremated with the mother, as artificial feeding is impossible with the Koryak's means of existence.

The Koryak are very fond of children. They take good care of them and fondle them. Children are beaten very rarely, and yet they are meek and obedient. I have often marvelled at the authority exercised by the elders over the children. I related the case[4] of a girl of about nine who consented

[1] See Part I, pp. 100, 101. [2] See p. 601. [3] See p. 602. [4] See p. 591.